



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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Thoughts for the week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



At the conference I attended last week with the Heads of school from New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, one of the hot topics of discussion was the idea of Design Learning. Several workshops and lecture were devoted to exploring the idea of stimulating learning within the context of unconventional or untraditional parameters. Design Learning, as it was proposed by Scottish educator, Ewan McIntosh, takes its lead from asking a series of questions before determining what is to be learned.

Traditionally, curriculum discussions around planning and executing an educational plan tend to begin with the question of *what* we should teach. However, Design Learning suggests beginning with a different question, specially asking the question *why* we teach what we do rather than *what* we teach or should teach.

At first look, this question may not appear to be useful. After all, the history of education supports the *what* matrix rather than the *why* matrix. Yet in the early years of progressive education, specifically in the works of John Dewey, the "why" question was frequently asked because of Dewey's insistence on involving children in the process of determining their educations. The progressive model empowered the learner to take control of the learning process and thereby create learning environments that were simultaneously personal and universal.

Design Learning builds upon this concept. In creating curriculum, the question *why* leads us to consider, as McIntosh put it, raising a problem rather than simply solving it. I think that the point of beginning with the "why" of learning brings the learner into a direct experience of educational purpose and meaningfulness. Traditional teachers rarely ask the *why*; students always ask the *why*. How many times will a student ask a teacher why are we studying this or that subject? The answers usually invoke ideas of necessity, practicality and tradition, all of which are valid answers to the question. Yet they really don't touch the embedded ontology of the question.

When a student or teacher asks the *why* question about learning, the pathway opened by that question brings us to the heart of education. What we decide to include in our curriculum reflects our view of what is important to our culture, our traditions and to our intellects. We often find ourselves at Garden asking the why question, which begins with the intellect and then moves to the other threads of culture and tradition.

By establishing this primacy of the 'why' of learning, we reaffirm the earliest impulses of early childhood, during which a child is working to make sense of their world, and the most frequently asked question is "why" and not "what." Asking *why* touches the fundamental core of our evolutionary penchant for knowing and learning.

Let's ask it more.



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Wednesday, November 19 : Grades 1 – 12 Parent/Teacher Conferences, 3 – 8 :30 PM
- Thursday, November 20 : Morgan Library trip for Grades 9 and 10
- Friday, November 21 : Thanksgiving Feast for Lunch (PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE)
- Wednesday, November 26 : Bake Sale for Fitness Club
- Thursday - Friday, November 27 – 28 : School Closed for Thanksgiving Break
- Saturday, December 6 : Merit Exam at 9 AM for Grades 5 to 10
- Monday, December 8 – Wednesday, December 10 : Holiday Boutique Sale
- Friday, December 12 : Pasta Night (5 :15 – 7 PM or 7 :30 – 9PM)
- Friday, December 19 : Noon Dismissal / Lower Division Show at 9 AM / Upper Division Winter Trip
- Monday, December 22 – Friday, January 2 : School Closed for Winter Break
- Monday, January 5 : Classes Resume



IMPORTANT SAVE THE DATES!!



- The Garden School Gala will take place on Friday March 27, 2015 at Terrace on the Park

GARDEN SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Wednesday's General Assembly was an excellent demonstration of a caring and dedicated community coming together to celebrate success and to share information and ideas as we look towards the future. Thank you to all in attendance. This is what makes Garden great!





English for Nursery

By: Carmela Knopf (Nursery Teacher)

Nursery has started learning their alphabet. With every letter introduced, we read a book from Jane Belk Moncure collection. Each book tells a story using a letter from the alphabet. We also have alphabet books that feature simple, repetitive text that's ideal for emergent readers. On the smart board, we listen to a chant for the letter being taught and choose photos to improve letter - recognition. To reinforce each letter, we color pages with corresponding pictures and make a puppet to take home. For our classroom quilt, we add a letters after they are taught.

English for Pre-K

By: Eileen Reyes (Pre-K Teacher)

This year in Pre-Kindergarten, the students will be working on upper and lower case letter recognition, connecting sound to symbol, tracing letters, and writing letters. These skills lead the way to reading. Letters and words are pointed out in picture books, street signs, food labels, and just about anywhere they can be seen throughout the day. Books are read in all subject areas each day to introduce, teach, and follow up lessons taught. Letters Aa through Gg have been introduced since September. Smartboard activities and games are another way to teach the ABC's and build phonemic awareness. Two series of books are used thought the year that target letter recognition skills that lay the foundation for reading: *AlphaTales* by Scholastic Inc. and *My First Steps to Reading* by Jane Belk Moncure.

English for Kindergarten

By: Kristen Ahlfeld (Kindergarten Teacher)

Each week in Language Arts the kindergarteners focus on a new letter of the alphabet. We brainstorm words that begin with the letter and list them on our board. The students are instructed on proper letter formation, and then we practice the important skill of writing on the lines in their notebooks. The children also are learning to use a dictionary by finding a new word each day and listing it on the correct page in their word journals. In connection with our letter of the week, each morning at circle time the job of our class geographer is to locate a country on the world map that also corresponds to our letter. Each day the children also learn a new word in sign language that begins with our focus letter. The students also work in their phonics books and have homework each night to reinforce their new skills. We aim to connect the disciplines to make lessons more meaningful and part of their everyday life.

In our author study, We have been reading about by famous childrens' author Tomie DePaola and the class enjoyed a visit from a literary character. *Strega Nona* came and recreated her story of the bubbling pasta pot that overflowed into the village. The children had fun dramatizing the story and blew the 3 magical kisses to stop the pasta pot from cooking. We then all ate delicious pasta like just the villagers in the story.





Science for Grades 1 to 3

By: Lou Albano (Science Teacher)

The enthusiastic first graders have ventured into the world of science. They have learned about the basic differences between the living and non-living worlds and the interactions that occur in order to maintain life. We have carefully travelled through the daily requirements of plants, and have proceeded to investigate the requirements for animals. Life on Earth is diverse, and not all living things can survive in all parts of the Earth. The discussion of habitat and survival is ongoing. We are investigating various ecosystems of the world, and how they are affected by human intervention. To elaborate on the ocean habitat, we have watched “The Reef 2” and have made connections with our class discussions about habitats. As stated in Garden School mission statement, **“We empower every student... to meet responsibly the challenges of everyday life.”** The first graders are working diligently in their study of science, and they enhance their knowledge of everyday life.



Our inquisitive second graders investigated plants, their parts, their groupings, and how new plants emerge. We have discussed how they grow and change, and how they adapt to their diverse environments. We have started to discuss animals, such as vertebrates, mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians. We will be looking at adaptations that animals have made in order to survive on the complex Earth. We will also discuss invertebrates.



We have had several hands on activities including how to measure their height with a meter stick, how a controlled variable is used in an experiment, how salt affects buoyancy of water, and how water temperature affects the rate at which sugar dissolves. We will shortly begin planting seeds and observe the changes the seeds undergo as they germinate and grow into plants.

Our ambitious third graders have started to discuss the intricate topic of ecosystems and relationships that they exhibit. We will discuss ecosystems in great detail, comparing and contrasting the various ecosystems of the world. In addition, we will begin planting seeds and observe the changes the seeds undergo as they germinate and grow into plants. The third graders are working hard in their science class.



Museum of the City of New York Trip

By: Nilla Ingravallo and Phillip D’Anna (Grade 3 and 4 Teachers)

The city of New York is rich with culture, heritage, and history. This past week the third and fourth grade classes travelled to Manhattan’s East Harlem neighborhood to visit the Museum of the City of New York. This history and art museum offers numerous exhibits that feature immigration, architecture, and photographs that tell of the history of our great city.





Our classes dedicated time at the museum to another important topic, social activism. For 350 years New York has been a site of historical reform. Together, we investigated the fight that New Yorkers have endured for their rights and freedoms. By analyzing photographs, pamphlets, signs, and banners, the classes considered the importance of the abolition movement, women's suffrage, the civil rights struggle, immigration reform, and more!

The students were excited about their culminating activity. They were each given a blank button which would become their symbol for a social issue that they felt to be of high importance. Many students focused on recycling, pollution, equality, and freedom. Their button allowed them to display the values that they hold dear to them and discuss them in an informal class setting.



Following the museum, the class enjoyed lunch in Central Park. They talked about the museum, past experiences in New York and ran around the park playing games together. It was a great day for the third and fourth grade students to experience and learn more about a city that has such a distinct feeling of pride.

We would like to extend a final thank you to Mr. Ivojevic and the chaperones that helped make our trip an enjoyable and memorable one!

Foreign Language for Grades 4 to 6

By: Gabriel Gomis (French Teacher)

Fourth grade students have been practicing two French songs ("Alouette" and "Vive le Vent"). If "Alouette" is very popular in French Canada, "Vive le Vent" celebrates the winter holidays events. Students have previously learned likes and dislikes, numbers, the alphabet, the nasal sound and accents in French. They have been practicing their oral skills through dialogue and games. This week, we introduced the weather expressions. We also began "Le Petit Nicolas", a French children's movie that stresses friendship and camaraderie and ends with a mockery of adulthood. Each day, we improve both our oral and writing skills.

These past two weeks, French 5 have been rehearsing "A la Claire Fontaine", a traditional French song that dates as far back as 1604 during the first French settlement in Canada. They completed also the irregular verb "vouloir" (to want), the numbers from 0 to 100, days of the week and months of the year. They should know how to write the date in French or say their birthday in French. They all tested their oral skills about the topics above and the ones they learned previously in the weeks before.

As for French 6, we stressed clothing vocabulary and adjectives. Student in French 6 learned the gender and the position of the adjectives. We emphasized adjectives that relate to beauty, age, goodness and size. With this new acquisition, they should be able to describe people and things. They are often paired in class to test their oral skills through dialogue. we rehearsed "Je ne Regrette Rien" by Edith Piaf, A former cabaret singer who was to become a French national diva.



History for Grade 7

By: Richard Kruczek (History Teacher)

"Why do we have to follow the Constitution?" This question - asked today - is more profound than one may think. What this student was asking me was, essentially, a question about why the Constitution is so essential to the commonwealth of the nation. These are the types of queries that the students have been offering all week, one devoted to the Constitution and its creation.

The highlight of the week was a debate over whether representation in the national legislature should be based on population or an equal number for each state. Their points and rebuttals were witty, deep and made with forethought. It was a great exercise, one I'll surely have them repeat in the future.

In short, they get it - and want to get it more. That is the essence of any good classroom environment, and it's so because of one factor only: the inquisitive student. Long may it last.



History for Grade 8

By: Sarah Smith (History Teacher)

Throughout the month of November students of Area Studies are studying East and Central Africa. There were many discussions of the Ancient societies, the impact of European conquest and lastly the path to developing a new independent nation. As the unit on East Africa began, we looked at how location and physical geography can dictate the history of a nation.

Many recall Persia, Greece, and Rome when Ancient Empires are discussed. Few recall the accomplishments of the Axum Civilization. This society with its proximity to the Red Sea and Arabia Peninsula was a center of trade for the world. Eighth graders analyzed primary sources and examined artifacts so as to glean information about the role of religion, trade, and kings. As we moved from the ancient societies, students read about the impact religion and leadership had on modern nations such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia.

Lastly, students learned how colonialism can create conflicts amongst ethnic groups such as the Hutu and Tutsis in Rwanda. Many Eighth graders were impressed how a nation could move forward after a horrific genocide and reunite and forgive so as to create a better future for its people. We realized that diversity is something that should be treasured and not lead to conflict which is an important lesson for each individual student.



Art for Grade 9

By: Tiina Prio (Art Teacher)

The Renaissance Class is finishing up their Michelangelo unit by drawing The Prophet Isaiah and The Delphic Sibyl.

Giorgio Vasari said of the Prophet Isaiah that, "Anyone who studies this figure, copied so faithfully from nature, the true mother of the art of painting, will find a beautifully composed work capable of teaching in full measure all the precepts to be followed by a good painter". I'm always delighted by the 'objects' the artists in class draw, that Prophet Isaiah might be looking at behind his shoulder. I've seen cartoon characters, insects and under the ocean scenes. The artists are always so clever in coming up with images.

The last Michelangelo fresco that the artists worked on was The Delphic Sibyl. The sibyls were female seers from antiquity. How Stuff Works states that, "The Delphic Sibyl was the voice of Apollo, the Greek god of music, poetry, prophecy, and medicine, and it has been suggested that the four colors in her garments represent Earth, Water, Fire and Air -- the basic elements of life."

The next phase of the Renaissance class is to draw four Leonardo da Vinci sketches from his Codex. All eight projects will be included in their Renaissance Book which is proudly kept through the years. I have asked visiting Alumni from years ago if they still have their Renaissance Book and they say, "Of course!"



Physical Education for Grades 11 and 12

By: Flance Dervishi (Athletic Director)

We've started our Basketball unit in Physical Education. Basketball is the most competitive and exciting unit in the Physical Education program. We started the unit off with rules and making sure each student understands the game of Basketball. We then led into teaching some simple techniques. The students learned different ways of passing the ball and why different ways of passing the ball is effective in certain situations. Some of the passes we went over are:

- Chest pass - A chest pass is the basic way to pass the basketball.
- Bounce pass - The bounce pass often is as accurate as a chest pass and harder to defend.
- Baseball pass - The baseball pass is used when the ball is in the back court -- often after a steal -- and your teammate is breaking to the basket.
- Outlet pass - Defensive rebounders often use the outlet pass.
- No-Look pass - The no-look pass is designed to confuse the defense.

All students lined up with a classmate and had the chance to practice all 5 passes with each other. We also went over different ways of dribbling the basketball (high bounce, change of pace, and crossover between the legs & behind the back). We then described why and when each dribble would be effective in certain situations.

Next week, the students will learn how to make a layup and how to properly shoot the basketball into the hoop, by then all students will have a better understanding of how to play the game of basketball. We will then divide the students into teams and start our regular basketball season. We Look forward to watching everything they learned in action.



GARDEN SCHOOL SWEATSHIRTS FOR SALE!

Parents, Family & Friends!

The PTA is selling these terrific hooded sweatshirts that everyone is going to want! Show your Garden School spirit and help support Garden and the PTA in building a strong community. The funds collected go to support school community enrichment activities including movie night for our Lower Division, Senior Prom, and much much more. So, share this link with family members, friends and everyone that you know, and consider them as a thoughtful Holiday gift for a current Garden School student, faculty member and/or alum to support and show school spirit.



These sweatshirts are \$35.00 and there are youth – adult sizes available. The campaign will only run until November 26th and then close so get your order in ASAP!

After the campaign closes the shirts will be shipped within 2 weeks. Please go to the link below to order and thank you for enriching Garden School community life!

Order your Sweatshirts here! <http://www.booster.com/gardenschool>

GARDEN SCHOOL YEARBOOK

Dear Parents and Students,

Just a friendly reminder to get your Garden School 2014/15 Yearbook order in! Also, did you know that you can have your very own dedication pages? Please open the attachments to see examples of dedications and friendship pages. Your pages will be printed in every yearbook!

Students can also design pages and share the costs with the friends, teammates etc.!

To order click http://www.jostens.com/apps/store/productDetail/1054215/Garden-School/Yearbook/2014082404164079370/CATALOG_SHOP/YB_BOOKS/All-Color-Yearbook/2014082404164082370/

by the November 30th deadline.

Order today, time and space are limited!

Thank you!

Garden PTA

